

RELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONALITY TRAITS AND PARENTING STYLES ASSESSMENT IN STUDENTS^{1,2}

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Abstract

Personality traits play an important role in almost all aspects of an individual's functioning and are one of the bases for assessing the way parents raise children. Therefore, the question arises as to how young people with different personality traits perceive their parents and what their experience of closeness, emotional warmth/coldness, and set boundaries is. The aim of the research reported here was to examine whether personality traits and gender can be a basis for predicting parents' educational styles. The ZKPQ (Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire) (Zuckerman et al., 1999) questionnaire was chosen to measure the following basic personality traits: activity, aggressiveness, sensation seeking, neuroticism, sociability. The Parenting Styles Measurement Questionnaire - PSDQ (Robinson et al., 2001) was used to operationalize four educational styles: authoritarian father, authoritarian mother, authoritative father, and authoritative mother. The sample was convenient and consisted of 291 students ($N_{\text{female}} = 72.5\%$), aged 18 to 24 years ($M = 19.19$; $SD = 1.37$). The respondents were high school students and first and second-year students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, Serbia. The collected data were statistically processed using the regression analysis procedure, and the main results are as follows. The students personality traits could explain 9.5% total variance in the authoritarian parenting style of fathers ($R^2 = .09$, $F_{5,207} = 4.36$, $p = .001$) while significant predictors were aggressiveness ($\beta = .26$, $t = 3.73$, $p < .001$) and neuroticism ($\beta = .17$, $t = 2.41$, $p < .017$). Neuroticism was also found to be a significant predictor of the mother's authoritarian parenting style ($\beta = .14$, $t = 2.09$, $p = .037$). Gender was a significant predictor of the father's authoritative parenting style ($\beta = .13$, $t = 1.97$, $p = .049$). The results obtained are considered from the perspective of the theoretical framework of this research and the existing empirical evidence. Possible educational and other implications of the findings of this study are also outlined.

Keywords: *Personality traits, parenting styles, gender differences, students.*

1. Introduction

Personality traits are relatively stable and enduring internal characteristics that describe or determine an individual's behavior across a range of situations, i.e., that imply consistency in responding in the same or similar situations (VandenBos, 2007). They represent stable patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that influence various aspects of an individual's life, including their interpersonal relationships and perceptions of social interactions. Among these relationships, the parent-child dynamic is of particular importance, as it significantly shapes a young person's psychological and emotional development. Given that personality traits affect cognitive and affective processing, it is reasonable to assume that they also play a role in how individuals perceive their parents' educational styles. The following personality traits were examined in this study: Activity (general need for activity and work activity), Aggression-hostility (verbal aggression, rudeness, recklessness, malice, vindictiveness, and impatience), Impulsive Sensation Seeking (impulsive reactions and a need for excitement and novelty), Neuroticism-anxiety (emotional distress, tension, worry, fearfulness, and sensitivity to criticism) and Sociability (propensity to socialize and party, tolerance to social isolation) (Zuckerman et al., 1999).

The parenting style reflects the emotional climate in which the interaction between parents and children takes place. It develops in early childhood and continues throughout an individual's youth. Diane Baumrind (Baumrind, 1966), the author of one of the most widely accepted models, identifies three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. The authoritarian parenting is characterized by a high level of parental control and a low degree of warmth. Parents do not encourage open

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discussions, believing that children should unquestioningly accept their authority (Baumrind, 1966). Compliance is expected, and disciplinary methods often include punishment and strict measures. They articulate clear rules that they expect to be followed (Estlein, 2016). The authoritative parenting style, on the other hand, balances high expectations with emotional warmth and support. While setting clear behavioral rules, authoritative parents also explain the reasoning behind them. This style fosters an environment of respect, emotional security, and a sense of belonging, where children feel valued by their parents. Although this style exhibits neither a coercive nor a permissive disciplinary approach, it is, unlike both styles, sensitive and demanding, confrontational and supportive of autonomy (Baumrind, 2013). The permissive parenting is defined by high emotional warmth but low parental control. Permissive parents have little control over interactions with their children and often give in to their children's wishes and requests (Estlein, 2016). Such parents set few clear boundaries or behavioral guidelines, instead allowing children to act freely, make their own choices, and self-regulate their activities (Baumrind, 1966).

2. Method

2.1. Objective

The aim of the research was to examine whether personality traits and gender of the respondents could be the basis for predicting the educational styles of their parents.

2.2. Sample

The sample was convenient and consisted of 291 respondents ($N_{\text{male}} = 80$ (27.5%), $N_{\text{female}} = 211$ (72.5%)), aged 18 to 24 years ($M = 19.19$; $SD = 1.37$). The respondents were high school students and first and second-year students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, Serbia.

2.3. Instruments

Personality traits were measured using **Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire - 50 – CC** (ZKPQ-50-CC; Aluja et al., 2006); which is a cross-cultural shortened form of the ZKPQ, consisting of 50 true/false statements. It contains five scales: activity ($\alpha = .70$); aggressiveness ($\alpha = .62$); impulsive sensation seeking ($\alpha = .62$); neuroticism ($\alpha = .74$); sociability ($\alpha = .74$).

The Parenting Styles Measurement Questionnaire (PSDQ), (Robinson, Mandelco, Olsen & Hart, 2001) consists of 32 items that form three subscales: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive style. Respondents were asked to separately assess the parenting style of their father and mother, on a five-point Likert-type scale. The reliability of authoritarian and authoritative style was $\alpha = .8$, and $\alpha = .86$. Due to low reliability, the permissive style subscale was not included in further data processing.

3. Results

In the following, the basic descriptive statistical results are presented first.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Variables	AS	SD	Min	Max	Sk	Ku
Authoritative father	3.12	.93	1.00	4.93	-.19	-.89
Authoritative mother	3.67	.77	1.33	5.00	-.57	-.23
Authoritarian father	1.87	.74	1.00	5.00	1.99	6.57
Authoritarian mother	1.91	.77	1.00	5.00	1.49	2.09
Activity	3.99	2.21	0.00	9.00	.13	-.74
Aggression-hostility	4.41	2.32	0.00	10.00	.18	-.63
Impulsive Sensation Seeking	5.10	2.30	0.00	10.00	.09	-.58
Neuroticism	5.07	2.48	0.00	10.00	-.03	-.94
Sociability	4.38	2.53	0.00	10.00	.14	-.89

Table 2 presents the results of the regression analysis.

Table 2. Regression analysis.

	Authoritarian parenting of father				Authoritarian parenting of mother			
	β	t	p		β	t	p	
Activity	-.03	-.43	.666	$R^2 = .095$ $F = 4.36$ $p = .001$.05	.67	.504	$R^2 = .039$ $F = 1.81$ $p = .111$
Aggression-hostility	.26	3.73	.000		.10	1.43	.154	
Impulsive S. Seeking	-.07	-.92	.360		-.05	-.69	.491	
Neuroticism	.17	2.41	.017		.14	2.09	.037	
Sociability	.10	1.29	.200		-.04	-.53	.596	

Personality traits explained 9.5% total variance in the authoritarian parenting style of fathers, while significant predictors were aggressiveness and neuroticism. Neuroticism was also found to be a significant predictor of the mother's authoritarian parenting style. Gender was a significant predictor of the father's authoritative parenting style ($\beta = .13$, $t = 1.97$, $p = .049$).

4. Discussion and conclusion

The results showed that personality traits have a significant, but not a large contribution to the assessment of parenting styles in our sample. Many factors influence the assessment of parenting styles, such as personal experience, cultural factors, living together or apart from parents, etc. In our research, we did not obtain satisfactory reliability of the traits of aggressiveness and the impulsive sensation seeking, which casts doubt on the findings concerning these personality traits. The trait of aggressiveness significantly contributes to students' perception of parenting as authoritarian and restrictive. Parents, according to students who are more aggressive, do not justify their educational demands enough, are demanding when it comes to obedience and behavior control, and are not perceived as emotionally warm. High neuroticism contributes to greater sensitivity to the mother's authoritarianism. Neuroticism contributes to lower frustration tolerance, so the mother's parental prohibitions and lack of reasoning are perceived as the mother's authoritarianism. Greater irritability and violent reactions to stress contribute to the perception of mother's upbringing as more restrictive and controlling. Finally, gender significantly contributes to the perception of the father's parenting style as authoritative, warm, controlling, but also supportive (it is true for the female subsample). It is important to note that parental behavior is also affects the parenting style: cooperative, motivated and responsible teenagers encourage an authoritative parenting style in their parents, while uncooperative and irresponsible teenagers encourage an authoritarian or neglectful parenting style (Kopko, 2007). In addition, recent research in our region shows that the prevailing parenting style contributes to the development of self-esteem in adolescents (Todorović, 2005) and the interaction between parents and children should be viewed from the perspective of the functionality of family relationships and competent parenting (Matejević and Todorović, 2012). Finally, we emphasize that respondents assess that their parents practice an authoritative parenting style to a greater extent than an authoritarian and permissive one, which is considered suitable for their development.

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